

Message Text

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ACTION XMB-04

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07

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FM AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2575

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PASS EXIM BANK

EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: BEXP, IV

SUBJ: MULTINATIONAL AGRIBUSINESS SYSTEMS INCORPORATED CONSULTING
CONTRACT WITH SODESUCRE

1. SUBSEQUENT TO EX-SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE ORVILLE FREEMAN
VISIT TO IVORY COAST IN AUGUST 1974, EXCHANGE OF CORRESPONDENCE
BETWEEN FREEMAN AND MINAG SAWADOGO HAS LED TO GOIC
INVITATION OF MULTINATIONAL AGRIBUSINESS SYSTEMS INCORPORATED
(MASI) TO VISIT IVORY COAST TO EXAMINE POSSIBLE ROLE IN
SECOND SUGAR COMPLEX. ORVILLE FREEMAN IS CHAIRMAN OF
BOARD OF MASI.

2. DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN MASI AND VARIOUS IVORIAN OFFICIALS
INDICATE THAT MASI HAS REASONABLE CHANCE OF BECOMING
CONSULTING ENGINEER FOR SODESUCRE WITH CONTRACT
SUPERVISION RESPONSIBILITY FOR SECOND SUGAR, COMPLEX TO BE
BUILT BY RED RATH (CANADIAN CORPORATION) A SUBSIDIARY
OF TATE AND LYLE. (UK CORPORATION)

3. FNCF MET IN DECEMBER IN WASH WITH EXIM
BANK, RED PATH, THE DIRECTOR OF SODESUCRE AND
IVORIAN AMBASSADOR AHOUA TO DISCUSS FINANCING FOR THE
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AMERICAN-SOURCED PORTION OF THE PROJECT. THE BANK OF

MONTREAL IS REPORTEDLY FINANCING THE CANADIAN PORTION.

4. GOIC NEGOTIATIONS WITH RED PATH ARE TO POINT WHERE FNCB IS PREPARED TO BRIDGE FINANCE START-UP COSTS OF DOLLARS 20 MILLION IF EXIM WILL COMMIT THEMSELVES TO FINANCING AMERICAN EQUIPMENT INPUTS AND TO AN ARRANGEMENT THAT DOLLARS 20 MILLION CAN EVENTUALLY BE REFINANCED AT MORE FAVORABLE EXIM RATES.

5. IN VIEW OF HISTORY OF SODESUCRE, LONRHO, LANG RELATIONSHIPS IN FIRST SUGAR PROJECT, EMBASSY CONCERNED THAT EVERYTHING GET A PROPER START. THEREFORE, BRIEFING INPUTS TO MASI ARE AS COMPLETE AS POSSIBLE WITHIN LIMITS OF LANG CONFIDENTIALITY TO INSURE EYES-OPEN APPROACH TO SITUATION.

6. ON THE OTHER HAND, EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE WASH APPRAISAL OF MASI CAPABILITY TO GEAR UP TO THEIR FIRST SUGAR PROJECT GIVEN THEIR CORPORATE RESOURCES AND EXPERIENCE. MASI HAS FIVE PERMANENT EMPLOYEES IN WASHINGTON AND IS CURRENTLY ENGAGED IN PROJECTS IN AFGHANISTAN, TANZANIA AND NIGERIA.

SMITH

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